



Compost Certification Scheme
Independent audits of CCS Appointed Laboratories
Summary report 2018

Independent Audits 2018

The fourth round of audits was carried out in summer and autumn of 2018 by Dr Thomas Aspray. The audit round consisted of a pre-audit document inspection and site visits for all laboratories (including sub-contractors) involved in compost testing for PAS100 certification purposes. Following the visits, each of the Appointed Laboratories received an Audit Report which confirmed any non-conformances identified during the course of the audit requiring mandatory action by the laboratory.

As with previous audits, non-conformances were found at all laboratories; however, the number and severity of the non-conformances has generally decreased during the four years despite the audits being increasingly stringent year on year and with subtle changes of focus in each year. Non-conformances identified during audits for three of the appointed laboratories included:

- Isolated analysis errors;
- Minor control system weaknesses

The laboratories were required to respond to the Audit Report in a timely manner, and agree with the auditor a list of suitable corrective actions to address these non-conformances. The corrective actions then evidenced to the auditor by the laboratories.

During the process of auditing the fourth laboratory various non-conformances were identified relating to one test method. Given the number and severity of some of these non-conformances, a decision was taken to suspend testing of this method immediately following the audit and transferring testing of the method to another appointed laboratory. Further non-conformances were identified during the course of the audit; however, specific corrective actions with appropriate timescales were not provided by the December 2018 deadline.

Outcome

The auditor supported REAL's decision to renew the appointment of three laboratories as REAL CCS Laboratories for 2019; clear adherence to *the terms and conditions for appointed laboratories* was

demonstrated. The fourth laboratory, Eurofins Agro Testing UK Ltd, was not recommended for reappointment. The laboratory's appointment was subsequently not renewed by REAL.

Independent Audits 2019

In 2019, the CCS laboratory audits will be combined with the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) laboratory audits. For laboratories approved to both schemes, currently ATL Ltd and NRM Laboratories, this will make the auditing process more efficient. For REAL, this has freed up resource to look into the development of a proficiency testing programme for tests specific to the two schemes which will provide a number of benefits including:

- Supporting the auditing process
- Provide greater year round laboratory performance monitoring
- Improve measurement accuracy

Alongside the changes in auditing arrangements, REAL has now developed a new set of *terms and conditions for approved laboratories* which combines the former separate CCS and BCS terms and conditions for appointed laboratories into one. The updated terms and conditions have been reviewed and agreed by the three now approved laboratories. The new version can be found on the CCS website [here](#).

Approved Laboratories

The current approved laboratories for BCS and CCS are as follows:

Compost Certification Scheme	Biofertiliser Certification Scheme
ATL Ltd	ATL Ltd
NRM Laboratories	NRM Laboratories
D&F Associates Ltd	

Laboratory applications

[Guidance](#) notes and an [Application Form](#) have been published on the CCS website for laboratories wishing to apply to become appointed under the Scheme.